

Serial No. 10/681,847

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended) A method for producing [[a]] an ultrafine fiber, comprising: spinning an island polymer and a sea polymer into [[a]] an ultrafine fiber, wherein said island polymer is an polyolefin polymer having a density less than 1.0 g/cm³ and a flexural modulus more than 9000kg/cm² and said sea polymer has a different dissolving and removing property from that of said island polymer.

Claim 2 (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said island polymer and sea polymer is spun in a weight ratio ranging from about 5:95 to about 95:5 by a mixed spinning method or a conjugated spinning method to said fiber.

Claim 3 (canceled)

Claim 4 (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said island polymer is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, ethylene-propylene copolymer, polyethylene elastomer polymer, and polypropylene elastomer polymer.

Claim 5 (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said sea polymer is an organic solvent-soluble polyolefin polymer selected from the group consisting of polystyrene, polyethylene, and ethylene-propylene copolymer.

Claim 6 (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said sea polymer is an alkali-soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of sulfonic sodium containing polyethyleneterephthalate and derivatives thereof.

Claim 7 (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said sea polymer further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of para-terephthalic acid, aliphatic dicarboxylic acid, aromatic dicarboxylic acid, aliphatic diol, aromatic diol, and carboxylic acid and derivatives thereof.

Claim 8 (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said sea polymer is a water-soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohol, water-soluble polyester copolymer comprising isopropyl alcohol (IPA), terephthalic acid (TPA), acrylic acid (AA), sulfonic sodium salt (SIP), and polyethyleneglycol.

Claim 9 (original) A method for producing [[a]] an ultrafine fiber substrate, comprising: spinning an island polymer and a sea polymer into [[a]] an ultrafine fiber, wherein said island polymer is an polyolefin polymer having a density less than 1.0 g/cm³ and a flexural

Serial No. 10/681,847

modulus more than 9000kg/cm² and said sea polymer has a different dissolving and removing property from that of said island polymer;

producing a substrate from said ultrafine fiber; and

removing said sea polymer from said substrate to obtain said ultrafine fiber substrate.

Claim 10 (currently amended) A method according to Claim 9, further comprising:

a step of immersing said substrate into a polymer prior to removing said sea polymer from said substrate.

Claim 11 (currently amended) A method according to Claim 9, further comprising:

a step of polishing a surface of said substrate surface after removing said sea polymer from said substrate.

Claim 12 (currently amended) A method according to Claim 9, wherein said substrate is ~~needle punch~~ needle-punched nonwoven fabric, or water punch water-punched nonwoven fabric, weaving weaved fabric, knitting or knitted fabric.

Claim 13 (canceled)

Claim 14 (new) A method according to Claim 9, wherein said island polymer is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, ethylene-propylene copolymer, polyethylene elastomer polymer, and polypropylene elastomer polymer.

Claim 15 (original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein said sea polymer is an organic solvent-soluble polyolefin polymer selected from the group consisting of polystyrene, polyethylene, and ethylene-propylene copolymer.

Claim 16 (currently amended) A method according to Claim 9, wherein said sea polymer is an alkali-soluble polymer ~~selected from the group consisting of sulfonic sodium containing polyethyleneterephthalate and derivatives thereof.~~

Claim 17 (currently amended) A method according to Claim 16, wherein said sea polymer further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of para-terephthalic acid, aliphatic dicarboxylic acid, aromatic dicarboxylic acid, aliphatic diol, aromatic diol, and carboxylic acid-and derivatives thereof.

Claim 18 (original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein said sea polymer is a water-soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohol, water-soluble polyester copolymer comprising isopropyl alcohol (IPA), terephthalic acid (TPA), acrylic acid (AA), sulfonic sodium salt (SIP), and polyethyleneglycol.

Serial No. 10/681,847

Claim 19 (original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein said island polymer has a fineness from about 0.5 to 0.001 denier per filament after removing said sea polymer from said ultrafine fiber.

Claim 20 (original) A method according to claim 9, wherein said island polymer and sea polymer is spun in a weight ratio ranging from about 5:95 to about 95:5 by a mixed spinning method or a conjugated spinning method to said fiber.